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LIFE AMONG THE MANDANS AND GROS VENTRES EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

AS DESCRIBED BY APARTNER OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY.

101 175 The Mandans were unknown to white men, until they were visited by the Sons of Sieur Veranderie, who reached the Missouri, by way of the Mouse river, and, in January, 1743, discovered the Rocky mountains. The Jesuit Coquard, who had accompanied the Veranderies in some of their expeditions, writes that they first met the Mantanes, and next the Brochets. After these, were the Gros Ventres, the Crows, the Flat Heads, the Black Feet and Dog Feet, who were established on the Missouri, even up to the Falls, and about thirty leagues beyond they found a narrow pass in the mountains.

114 After the organization of the North-west Company of Montreal, English traders came from the Assinaboine river, to trade with the tribes of the Missouri. The compiler of this article has in his possession a copy of the unpublished journal of Alexander Henry, a partner of the North-west Company, which contains the following account of what he knows of the condition, position and customs of the Mandans at the beginning of the present century, and extracts from which are worthy of preservation for the use of the antiquarian and ethnologist.

On the 7th of July, 1806, Henry left the post of the North-west Company at the junction of the Pembina with the Red River of the North, and on the 12th he arrived at the establishments of Riviere la Souris (Mouse river), on the south side of the Assinaboine river. A Hudson Bay Company post was on the north side, where a North-west Company post was once situated. He found the Hudson Bay Company's people very busy in making hair lines which are used to fetter horses. He writes: "The hair which they commonly make use of, is that which the buffalo has between the horns, which is sometimes upward of a foot long. They also make use of the horse hair for that purpose, which is much stronger."

The post near the Mouse River of the North West Company was in charge of F. A. LaRocque. On Monday the 14th of July the expedition left for the Missouri, consisting of Henry, Allan McDonald, T. Viandria, Joseph Du Charme, and Hugh McCracken, * the guide an old Irishman who had once been a soldier in the British artillery. McCracken was the per-

* Lewis and Clarke found McCracken in 1804 at the Mandan Village where they wintered. In an account of their expedition published in *Harper's Family Library*, vol. 1, page 125, under date of November 1, 1804, is the following: "Mr. McCracken the trader whom we found here set out to-day on his return to the British fort and factory on the Assiniboin River, about one hundred and fifty miles from this place."

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son who Lewis and Clarke found in October, 1804, trading among the Indians. On the 19th Henry and party came in sight of the Missouri. He writes in his Journal: "Descending the high banks we came to the river Bourbeuse [Bourbeux, Moiy.] We had much difficulty in crossing; on both sides nothing but soft clay, into which our horses sunk almost up to their ears. Having got through we washed and cleaned them, and ourselves in the Missouri * * * At 2 o'clock we saddled and proceeded on passing near to the water side. At the foot of the Lodge de Serpent is a bank upon the north side of the Missouri, about three hundred feet high; the side fronting the river is very steep and barren composed of gravel intermixed with a quantity of flat decayed stones of bluish and iron color with some streaks." 114

A short distance from the foot of the hill was a Gros Ventres winter village, and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon they arrived opposite the mouth of the Knife River, on the bank of which a mile from the Missouri, was also a village of Gros Ventres.[2] Riding down on the north bank of the Missouri, a distance of five miles, to a Mandan village, "we passed," writes Henry, "through one of their old villages that was abandoned a few years ago; they have now built about a mile lower down the river. Near this deserted village we saw great numbers of the dead exposed upon stages about eight feet from the ground. The envelopes or coverings are generally of dressed leathe- and parchments, many of which were still good, whilr others were decayed, and nothing but the bones appeared. e * * We now met a Mandan who was well armed, he ac* companied a party of women that were hoeing corn, and he served as their guard. On perceiving us, he instantly came up and shook hands with us and expressed himself by signs that we should put up at his village. We saw numbers of women and children at work in the corn field. 000 574 576

Just before we entered the village we were met by the chief of the place, Chat Noir * [Black Cat] and a number of the natives. Every one of them were shaking hands with us, and bid us welcome. The chief then conducted us to one of his huts, appropriated for the reception of the strangers. He has another, in which the principal friends of his family resides. He keeps one of his wives, in the one we were in, to attend upon his guests, cook, bring water, etc., and to serve as a bed fellow if required. [837]

In a moment, the whole village flocked around us, and all were curious to see what articles we had brought to trade, and they were neither troublesome, nor impertinent. Having unsaddled our horses, and taken our baggage into the hut, the 574 609

* Lewis and Clarke made Poscopsesh or Black Cat, the first chief of the village, and the grand chief of the whole Mandan nation.

1 [See category 116, p. 322, for section, missing here, which is in original Account, Ann 40] 2 [See category 116, p. 323, for missing section. — Ann 40]

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574 609 chief gave our horses in charge of a young man, and told us we need not be uneasy as there would be good care taken of them.

574 262 On going into the hut, we found buffalo hides spread on the ground, before the fire, for us to sit upon, and soon after we were presented with two large dishes of boiled corn and beans, after which they gave us another large dish of boiled dried meat, but very few of us could eat of it, as it had too strong a taste and smell.[1]

231 342 After some other details which we omit, Harvey writes that when night came: "One young man brought in our horses, and put them in the same hut along with us, upon the right hand, on entering, and ourselves upon the left; a space was enclosed with a railing to keep them within bounds. This custom causes their habitations to have a very disagreeable and offensive smell. This precaution of theirs is to keep the horses from being stolen by the Assiniboines, or other enemies, who are frequently lurking about the village.

515 291 "Towards evening, having gone down to the river side, I observed the custom of washing themselves in the Missouri. Both men and women make it a rule, every morning and evening, to go down to the river, and wash for some time; the men make use of the clay to wash their hair, which answers the purpose of soap to take out the white and red earth with which they daub it, after having washed. Modesty in the female sex appears to be a virtue they are unacquainted with. They wear a kind of leather shift which reaches down to the calves of their legs. This they slip off some distance from the shore, and walk very deliberately into the water entirely naked, in the presence of old and young who seem not to pay any attention to them. [2] * * * * The men make use of no other covering, in the summer season, than these buffalo robes, and even these are seldom worn within doors, and only thrown on when they go out to visit or walk about the village. [352] Both sexes sleep naked. Their beds are raised about two feet from the ground, and hung around with dressed skins. In summer they seldom use any coverings at night, but lay like so many brutes."[2] * * * * Mr. Henry gives a description of their lascivious dances which is too indelicate to publish. He writes under date of:

252 262 352 512 412 "Sunday, July 20th. At daybreak we were all up, and I took a walk down to the river, where I observed the same ceremony of washing as last evening, with as little reserve as before. Our host on our return presented us with some dried meat, and soon after a dish of corn and beans, but as it is not seasoned with any kind of grease or fat, after the first meal it has a very insipid taste. The corn is generally pounded or bruised in a wooden mortar, which is fixed fast and firm in the ground, in one corner of the hut, and this is the first work performed by the women in the morning.

[1] [Category 116, p. 325.-A] [2] [Category 116, p. 326.-A]

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formed by the women in the morning.[1] Their sweet corn and beans are boiled whole; they make use of large earthen pots of their own manufacture, made of black clay, of which they have plenty near their villages. They make them of different sizes, from five gallons to a quart. In these vessels is never anything of a greasy nature.[1] * * * * * The bottoms of the pots are of an oblong shape; it therefore requires much care to keep them from upsetting, for which purpose when they are put to the fire a hole is made in the ashes to secure and prop them erect, and when taken away they are placed upon a sort of mat made of the fibers of the bois blanc; these coils or rugs are made of different sizes, according to the dimensions of the several pots, which keeps them firm and secure. Some of these pots are provided with two cones, or handles.[1] * *

Baptiste La France made his appearance here. This man had left the Prairie la Souris [Mouse River] with a small assortment of goods for the purpose of trading, equipped by the Hudson Bay Company. He now resides upon the south side of the river, at the great Mandane village,* and hearing of the arrival of white people, he came over to us. He now informed the chief, Black Cat, who his guests were and the cause of our visit, which was mere curiosity. [The chief] instantly retired to his family hut and brought out his flag, which was given him in 1804–5; they alsogave him a silver medal, and the same articles were also given to the principal chief of each of the other villages, also several very useful utensils were left amongst them.† I saw the remains of an excellent large corn mill, which the foolish fellows had demolished on purpose to barb their arrows; the largest piece of it which they could not break nor work up into any weapon they have now fixed to a wooden handle, and make use of it to pound marrow bones, to make grease."

We were now desirous of crossing the river, therefore sent off La France to engage people of the opposite village to come over for us.[2] * * * * * * We were now informed that eight canoes were in waiting for us, from the opposite side, and the same number of young men had come over to assist in crossing our horses.[2] * * * * On our going over to the war side we found the chief of the Great Mandan village, Le Gros Blanc. He was waiting with his own canoe to ferry over Mr. Chaboillez and me. He appeared very

† To each chief, Lewis and Clarke presented a medal, a flag, and a uniform coat. In the narrative of the expedition is the following sentence: "A variety of other presents were distributed, but none seemed to give them more satisfaction than the iron corn mill, which we gave to the Mandans."

* The Mandans, about 1760, were settled on the banks of the Missouri, eighty miles below, seven villages on the west and two on the east side of the river. The two villages were reduced by small-pox, and moved up the river and settled a village near the Receivers, and afterwards the people of the other village joined them. In 1796 they were in two villages at the points where Henry found them, on opposite sides of Missouri, about three miles apart.

[1] [Category 116, p. 328.-A.] [2] [Category 116, p. 329.-A]

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609 622 attentive and polite in conveying our baggage on board. We now perceived another American flag flying in the village on the south side of the river, while that of the Black Cat was still displayed over the hut we had occupied. Our conductor now informed us the flag we saw in the opposite village was his property, and had been hoisted by his orders over his own hut, where he begged we would take up our lodgings. The young men, I [481 492] observed were very prompt in getting our horses over. They fastened a line to the horse's mouth, the end of which one of them takes in his teeth, and swims on ahead, while others swim along on each side, and in the rear, draws the horse on very expeditiously. They swim remarkably swift, and notwithstanding [481] the Missouri at this place is half a mile wide, and the current very strong, they drift down but a very considerable distance before they land.

501 Their canoes are of very singular construction and a stranger would scarcely dare venture his life in them to cross such a deep and rapid stream. They are of a circular form; the timbers are nothing but a few bent willows of about three inches in circumference, over which is stretched a raw buffalo hide, with the hair inside, and sewed first to the gunwales which are generally of a willow, about two inches in diameter. I was really surprised to see the great weight that one of those slender vessels would carry. We embarked, baggage, saddles, etc., weighing at least 200 pounds, Mr. Chaboillez and myself, and our ferryman, who was a remarkably stout fellow. Our canoe or dish would have supported at least 100 pounds more. What they make use of, in lieu of a paddle, is a pole about five feet long, split at one end so as to admit of a piece of board, about two feet long, and half a foot broad, which is lashed to the pole and forms a kind of cross, and as there is but one made use of for each canoe, and he that paddles pulls directly for the opposite shore, every stroke he gives turns his dish almost entirely around; when, to preserve his position and place him fronting his intended, route he must give a stroke upon the other hand which brings him up again, and so on until he gets over the river, which, however, is not accomplished until they have drifted down nearly a mile.

501 482 Some of them, I observed, were more expert than others in managing their dishes, and did not drift more than a quarter of a mile. But as these vessels are very light they have the precaution to carry them upon their heads, or slung upon their backs to a considerable distance higher up the river, than where they wish to land. When we were on the water our conductor repeatedly made signs to us to salute the flag, by firing our guns, but we did not think proper to comply with his wishes or pretended we did not comprehend him.

622 574 609 We soon after landed at the village, which is situated upon the very edge of the bank. Here we were received by another

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chief called Le Grand* who insisted upon our taking lodgings in his hut, which stood near the edge of the banks. We accordingly entered it, but soon after we were visited by several other principal men, who requested some of us to take up our abode in their huts during our stay among them. La France advised us to do so, telling us we would be more at our ease by separating than if we remained all in the same hut. Accordingly Mr. Chaboillez and his people, consisting of an Indian who was his brother-in-law, and Mr. Allen McDonnell, took up their lodgings with Hairy Horn, and our guide, Hugh McReacan, (Cracken) Straight Horn, myself and my people, T. Viandrie and Joseph Du Charme, remained with Le Grand, a very civil fellow. This arrangement having been settled and instantly put into execution, we were provided with beds, or buffalo hides to sit upon. * * * * * * We paid a visit to Le Gros Blanc, who thought we had somewhat slighted him in not taking up our residence in his hut, but kept the flag flying in honor of our arrival until sunset. We made amends as far as our circumstances would permit, and presented him with some tobacco, ammunition, etc., as a remuneration for his trouble in assisting us over. He was perfectly satisfied, and appeared highly pleased with the presents.

We found in this village a Canadian by the name of Jussaume,† who accompanied Captains Lewis and Clarke to Washington on their return from their voyage of discoveries to the Pacific Ocean as interpreter to the Mandan chief, Le Gros Blanc. This man has been a resident among the Indians for upwards of fifteen years. He speaks their language tolerably well, has a wife and family who live and dress in the same manner as the natives. As for himself, he still retains the outward appearance of a Christian, and his principles as far as I could observe, are much worse than those of a Mandane. He is possessed of every superstition natural to these people, nor is he different in performing every mean, dirty trick which they have acquired from their intercourse with a set of worthless scoundrels accustomed to visit these parts, some for the purpose of trade, and others, to save themselves from justice and the laws of their country, that would not fail to punish them for their numerous offenses."

EDWARD D. NEILL.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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*Le Gros Blanc, or Big White, called by the Indians Shahaka was the first chief of this village and was recognized by Lewis and Clark and presented with a medal. Ohheenaw, Le Grant, or Big Man was much esteemed in the tribe. He was a Cheyenne taken prisoner, and then adopted by the Mandans.

†In the narrative of Lewis and Clarke his name is spelled Jesseaume, and on the 27th of October, 1805, was engaged as interpreter, and with the expedition went to the Pacific Ocean, accompanied by his Indian wife and babe. On the 16th of August, 1806, soon after Henry's departure, Lewis and Clarke returned to the Mandan village, and Le Gros Black, Big White, with his wife and son and Jessaume, the next day accompanied the military expedition to St. Louis, and from thence they went to Washington and were presented to President Jefferson.

[Category 116, p. 332.-A.]

LIFE AMONG THE MANDANS EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

[Continued from page 253.]

FORMER RELATIONS OF PAWNEES[1] AND MANDANS.

175
648 Not many years ago the Pawnees and Mandans were allied to each other, and lived together in the same villages, which were situated on the banks of the river Missouri, about thirty leagues below. A misunderstanding happening to occur amongst them they separated, the Pawnees retired down the river and built their village where it stands at present (A. D. 1806), and the Mandans proceeded with an intention of settling themselves somewhere about the confluence of the Little Missouri river, or on the upper part of Reviere La Souris (Moose river). But on their arrival at this place the Big Bellies barred the road, and put a stop to their progress to the westward, telling them that they would not permit them, or any one, to build higher up the river, and desiring the Mandans to build where they are at present. The latter, it seems were not much inclined to comply, but dreading the displeasure of the others who were more numerous, comprised, then, of a village of nine hundred huts, necessity obliged them to accept the terms. Since that period the Pawnees and Mandans have frequently been at war, and as often made peace again. They are a stationary people as the Mandans, and cultivate the ground in the same manner;

1 [Henry[2] probably mistakes Pawnee for Arikara- -Analyst]

[pp. 254 to 377 have no information on the Mandan]

[p 377]

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175 they are represented as a treacherous, deceitful people, always
648 taking advantage of their neighbors, and favoring the Sioux when they come to war this way, and frequently intermix with them to annoy the Mandans and Big Bellies.

SIGN LANGUAGE.

201 This language is entirely different from the natives of this place, and it is only by signs that they usually communicate with each other, excepting a few among them who understand each other's language. It serves as interpreter upon any affair of importance. It is surprising how dexterous all these natives of the plains are, in the art of communicating their ideas by signs. They will hold conference, for several hours together, upon different subjects, and during the whole time not a single word will be pronounced upon either side, and still they appear to comprehend each other perfectly well. This mode of communication appears to be quite natural to them, other difficult events are performed with the greatest ease and readiness. They never seem to be at loss, or in want of a sign to express their meaning.

COURTESY TO STRANGERS.

648 Soon after our arrival, there was a great uproar occasioned
721 by the unexpected visit of six Pawnees, from their own vil-
728 lage, sixty leagues below this, on the banks of the same (Missouri) river. They were sent upon an embassy to treat for peace. It appears that last spring, some of these people had accompanied a war party of Sioux who came here and killed five Mandans. The latter nation, in company with the Big Bellies (Gros Ventres,) soon after returned the visit, and not finding the Sioux, on their return killed two Pawnees, but this did not satisfy them. They had informed the Pawnees that they might expect a more formal visit the ensuing fall; that both the Mandans and Big Bellies were determined to exterminate every Pawnee they could find, and lay their villages even with the ground.

To avoid this storm, the latter thought prudent to sue for
[202] peace. A messenger was instantly dispatched to the upper villages to give information of their arrival. In the meantime the strangers were very hospitably entertained, conducted into a hut, and presented with corn and beans, dried meats, etc. All were now silent for some time, awaiting the determination of the Big Bellies.

ARRIVAL OF GROS VENTRES.

The Big Bellies, in a short time, arrived on horse-back; about thirty men came down full speed; they brought down an inter-

[Category 116, p. 335.—A.]

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preter with them. They did not appear well pleased, and looked on the Pawnees with an eye of disdain. After some conversation they desired the Pawnees to return immediately to their own villages, and to inform their great war chief, Red Tail, that if he sincerely wished for peace, he must come up and then they would settle matters, as they were determined to have nothing to do with young men. They allowed two moons to consider upon the business, and perform the journey. If, at the end of that time, the Chief did not make his appearance, they would immediately gather up their corn, and in a body, go and find him out, in his own village, and convince him what Big Bellies (or as they call themselves Willow Indians), and Mandans could do when exasperated by the treacherous conduct of the Pawnees.

The six embassies promised to depart early next morning to inform their Chief, who they answer no doubt, would very soon wait upon them. Thus ended an affair, which at the commencement we supposed would conclude with the death of the strangers, by the great bustle and noise their arrival occasioned.

But I was afterwards informed that of such proceedings there was not the least danger; that the natives of this place make it a particular point of honor to protect every stranger who throws himself upon them and begs their clemency. Even their natural and most inveterate enimies, the Sioux, have been known to come into their villages unexpectedly, and were always received with hospitality, and well entertained during thei stay which by the way, they never permit to be more than one night when they are dismissed, and allowed to return to their own homes unmolested.

A HUNTING PARTY.

Towards the evening there was a whooping and howling among the young men who were standing upon their huts. This, it seems, was to announce the appearance of a hunting *party of the Mandans, who were just at that moment appear*ing upon the tops of the high bank to the south, and descending by a well-beaten road towards the village. The party consisted of about one hundred men on horseback, and each loaded with half a buffalo; some of them had even more, according to the strength of their horses, and the master will always ride, be his beast ever so loaded. They had been away since yesterday and found buffalo in great abundance near at hand. These people never go out hunting unless in large parties. The continual danger from their enemies obliges them to be very cautious; another reason is, that when the buffalo comes near at hand, they are anxious to prevent them from being driven away. For this purpose, it is customary for them all, in a body, to surround one herd only, which sometimes consists of several hundreds.

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224 Not one do they allow to escape, large and small, fat and lean, all must fall to prevent their alarming other herds.

The manner of hunting the buffalo answers another good purpose, which is that the bad and dull horses have an equal share with the best racers.

DIVISION OF THE BUFFALO HUNT.

[141] They never make use of fire arms in hunting the buffalo. The bow and arrow is the only weapon. When a hunting excursion is in agitation among the Mandans, they inform their neighbors on the north shore, and the Saulteurs (Fall Indians.) The Big Bellies have their own parties and seldom interfere with the others. They never go in the same direction, the one goes to the northeast, and the others to the southwest. The [131] Knife River, indeed, seems to be the boundary line. The day is fixed for their departure, when early in the morning as many as are inclined to be of the party assemble upon the rising grounds in the rear of the village, about one and a half miles to the south. When all are ready they proceed in one body to find out the buffalo, and seldom or never return light. I observed that on their arrival, an extraordinary custom prevailed among them — the horses are instantly unloaded and the meat taken into the huts, where it is spread out upon the ground and exposed for some time before the master or mistress of the hut makes use of it. Soon after it is arrived, the women whose husbands or sons have been hunting, enter the huts of those who have meat, when the mistress instantly gives them a share, and they walk away with it, so that it often happens that there remains not a mouthful for her own family. When this is the case, she, in her turn, goes to the huts of some of her friends who have been hunting and comes away with a load. I observed that in several huts of those who had not been hunting, there was more meat than in those who had been out. It is also customary for the old men and the old women, who have no sons, nor particular friends, to march out on the first news of the hunters' approach, to the distance of a mile or more, where they sit by the road, and almost every hunter in passing drops them a piece of meat. By these means every individual has a share of what has been killed.

431
224

VILLAGES LIKE MOLE HILLS.

361 These villages at a distance have the appearance of a cluster of mole hills, or musk rat cabins. They are nearly of a circular form. The huts are placed in a very irregular manner, and some so very close to each other, as scarcely to admit of a foot-passenger; others again, at a distance of twenty to thirty feet from each other.

¼ [Henry says southwest.-A.]

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OPEN SPACE IN VILLAGE.

But I observe, always, that nearly about the centre of each village is a large open space of about four acres in circumference, round which the huts are built very regularly, and at equal distances from each other, the doors fronting the open space. This circle might consist of thirty huts, and I make no manner of doubt were the first that were erected on the spot. 361

VILLAGE EXPANSION.

Others of their friends joined them afterwards, for various causes and built in the rear and erected their huts as they found it convenient, and as this continues to be the case, there are huts continually demolishing in one village, and others building in another. This often proceeds from misunderstandings they have had with either of the chiefs of the village, or their own neighbors, when finding their situation unpleasant and probably subject to frequent quarrels, they shift their quarters, but always take up their own residence among their own tribe. 361 621 578

The Mandans and Saulteurs are a stationary people, and never abandon their villages further than to go out hunting or on a war party. They are much more given to agriculture than the Big Bellies, and raise an immense quantity of corn, beans, squashes, tobacco, and some flowers. 361 241

A MANDAN HUT.

A Mandan hut is large and spacious, of a circular form. I measured the one I lodged in, and found it ninety feet from the door to the opposite side, forming a circumference on the inside of many paces. The whole space is dug out about one and a half feet below the surface of the earth. In the center is the fire place, which is a square space of about five feet, dug out two feet below the surface. The lower part of the hut is constructed by erecting strong posts about six feet out of the ground, at equal distances, upon these are laid logs of the same size, and reach from post to post, and form the circle. On the outer side are erected pieces of split wood of seven feet in length, in a slanting manner, the one end resting on the ground, the other leaning against the crown log or beam. Upon this beam again, are placed rafters about the size of a man's leg, and from twelve to fifteen feet long, in a slanting position, sufficient to drain off the rain; they are laid so close as to touch. The upper end is supported upon very stout pieces of square timber, which last are also supported by four very thick posts, about five feet circumference, and fifteen feet out of the ground, and fifteen feet asunder, forming nearly a square. Over these pieces of square timber, others again of equal size are laid crossing them at right 342 [354]

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342 angles, leaving open only a square space of about four feet on
[354] each side. This serves for chimney and windows, as they have no other opening to admit of light; and when it rains, even this is covered over with a canoe to prevent the rain from impairing their earthen pots. The whole of the roof is then well thatched with willows, to the thickness of six inches or more. Over the whole is laid about one foot of earth, and round the base to the height of three or four feet, and the thickness of three feet, which answers for security in case of an attack by the enemy, and keeps out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, provided with a covered way or porch on the outside, of the same height as the door, about seven feet broad and ten feet in length.

342 The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a
352 frame and suspended by cords from the beam, which forms the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber supported by two stout posts down in the ground, inside of the hut, one on each side of the door. As you enter the hut after passing through the porch and door, the first thing that strikes the view is a kind of triangular apartment on the left hand side of the door, and fronting the fire. This is for the purpose of fire-wood in the winter. This partition is constructed of square planks, about twelve feet high, and caulked to keep off the air from the door. Between the partition and the fire, there is commonly a distance of about five feet, which the master of the hut occupies during the day time, seated on a mat, constructed of small willows. * * * * These mats are about ten feet long and four broad. The two ends for about two and a half feet are raised from the ground in a slanting position and each supported by a kind of sofa; over the mat is spread buffalo skins.

352 Some of these couches are raised about a foot above the
571 ground. Seated upon this a Mandan sits all day long and receives his friends, smokes and chats the time away, with the greatest dignity. He sometimes passes the night there also, when not inclined to lay with his wives.

INSIDE ARRANGEMENT OF HUTS.

352 On the left side of the host begins their range of beds. The
513 master and his favorite wife always occupy the first, and his other wives each a separate one in succession, next to those of the young people. All are constructed in the same manner, and joining to each other lengthways.

MEDICINE STAGE,

353 At the bottom of the hut fronting the Masters' seat, stands his medicine stage, and indeed it may be called his whole riches

[See Category 116, p. 331-10. A.]

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and treasures, as it contains every thing he values most, viz: two bulls' heads, which seem to be their great Manitou and protection. They are well daubed over with earth, and particular care is taken of them. There is laid on, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps of his enemies, and every thing he most values. 353

MORTAR AND PESTLE.

Next to this stage, stand the mortar and pestle, fixed firm in the ground, and the remainder of the hut from that to the door is vacant during the daytime, but occupied during the night by the horses. Then there still remains a large space in the center, around the fire, for the use of the family, which is generally swept clean once a day. 342 412 231

CORN STAGE.

Fronting the entrance of each porch stands a stage raised about eight feet from the ground, twenty feet in length, and ten feet in breadth, for the purpose of hanging up their corn to dry, in the fall; these stages have a tolerable good flooring, which in the fall is covered with beans to dry, and posts are erected upon them, on the tops of which are laid poles or rafters, to which the corn and sliced squashes are suspended in tresses to dry. When their harvest is over, they must have a pretty effect, but at this season of the year they are lumbered up with different kinds of drift-wood, of which they make their fires, and it gives a very ugly appearance to the villages. 343 251 313 372

DRIFT WOOD.

This wood they collect, in the spring, when the ice breaks up, and when great quantities of this wood floats down, the natives being expert swimmers, and so very active, that there is scarcely a large tree escapes them, until they have a sufficient stock for the year. I observed lying opposite to each village, an immense pile of this wood, and some trees of an amazing size. Commonly, when they collect the drift wood there come down numbers of drowned buffalo, that have perished in attempting to cross above, at a season when the ice was bad. These animals the natives are very careful to haul on shore, as they prefer the flesh in that state. [222] [268

LIGHT HAIRED CHILDREN.

An extraordinory sight that struck me among these people, was to see several children, of about ten years of age, whose hair was perfectly gray, and bore a strong resemblance to aged persons. Those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not that strong coarse hair, so peculiar to the natives of North America; it is of a much finer nature, rather inclining to 142

[See Category 16, p. 390-91.]

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142 a dark brown, some few indeed I observed whose hair was almost fair. A Big Belly, in particular, I saw with yellow hair. This circumstance, I believe, could scarcely proceed from any connection with the whites, as it is now more than thirty years since they first saw us, and this man was at least forty years old. Their eyes are jet black, some few are of a dark grey.

LONG HAIR.

302 The men wear their hair long, twisted into small quaittes hanging down to the rump. Some have it of enormous length, trailing upon the ground. They seldom tie it, but allow their numerous small quaittes to flow in a more graceful manner upon their backs; they always daub it with white and red earth. The women wear their hair short, allowing it to grow no longer than to be of sufficient length to cover the ears and neck. They never tie it, nor make use of any ornament for the head further than sometimes daubing it with red earth.

LASCIVIOUSNESS.

837 609 578 They seem to be a very lascivious people. The men make not the least scruple in offering their wives to lay with strangers, without any solicitation, and are even offended, if their offers are not accepted, unless you can convince them, by some good reason, for refusing to comply, and that it is not out of contempt. They always expect payment for their complaisance, but a mere trifle will satisfy, even a single coat-button. Notwithstanding this courteous behavior to strangers, they are not entirely free from jealousies among themselves, which sometimes cause quarrels and bloodshed. The woman generally falls a sacrifice in an affair of this nature.[1]

MODE OF ROASTING MEAT.

252 They have a very peculiar way of roasting meat; a plecotte, in particular, is suspended from the roof of the hut exactly over the fire, the cord being passed through and fastened to the centre of the piece keeps it in a flat position directly over the flames. A person is seated near it, and with a small stick keeps it continually in motion by pushing it to and fro. When one side is done, it is turned over, and fit for use. This method is much more expeditious than the common way of roasting before the fire, and preferable, as it retains the natural juice and flavor.[2]

EDWARD D. NEILL.

1 [See category 116, p. 343-3. -A.]

2 [For further information in Henry's Journal not mentioned by Neill, see category 116, pp. 343 ff. -Analyst.]

Sections from Henry's Journal Not Printed in Neill's Version (page numbers refer to those in the Coues edition of Henry's Journal (1897):

224 [322] We had now a well-beaten path, but were several times in danger of breaking our necks in deep pits which the natives had dug in the path to catch wolves and foxes in winter. Some of them are 10 feet deep, hollowed out to a space about 30 feet in circumference, whilst the entrance is no wider than the foot-path and about five feet in length. Those holes are covered with dry grass at the season when wolves are good, and every morning are found to contain some of those animals. In summer the grass grows strong and high about the mouths, entirely concealing them, until one arrives upon the very brink and is in danger of tumbling in headlong.

491 241 [323] Before we reached the (Mandan) village, we passed through a wood about two miles long. The road was bad, deep with mud and mire, the river having overflowed there lately. Having got through this wood, we came to several plantations of corn, beans, squashes, and sunflowers—the latter, indeed, grow in every direction, without cultivation, at some distance from the fields, where the seed has been carried by the wind; but such are never gathered by the natives, as they are not so good as those that have been properly sown and taken care of.

262 574 [325] This was just to their own palate, as they seldom eat meat until it begins to smell. We were invited into several huts successively and presented with dried meat in a state of corruption, corn and beans, together with parched corn and fresh ears pounded up in a wooden mortar; this last dish we found good.

439 177 They soon asked us to trade, and brought buffalo robes, corn, beans, dried squashes, etc.; but we informed them that we did not come here for that purpose, merely to visit them and see the country. They could not comprehend why we should have come so far out of mere curiosity, and said that all white people who came there did so with a view to trade. They suspected that we had goods which we wished to take over the river to the other villages, and were anxious to prevent it. They plagued us until dark, when they retired disappointed.

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834 [326] Some few are modest enough to conceal with one hand
515 what should not be exposed to public view, but even this is done so carelessly as seldom to answer the purpose—a flea or a louse, of which they have a good store, will make them raise the hand to the parts attacked, leaving their nudities exposed. The river being very shallow for some distance from shore, they make no scruple of standing only knee deep, and thus wash themselves before going further to swim; and in coming out they pass close by you as unconcernedly as if they had on a petticoat or shift. They sometimes bundle up their leather garment under the arm or in one hand and walk deliberately into the village to their own huts, where they sit by the fire for some time with their families, they go to bed entirely naked.

834 ..... This evening we were plagued for some time by young women, who came in and wanted to lie with us; but as we did not care to accept their kind offers, they retired very much displeased, and muttering something we could not understand.

786 About midnight we were awakened by some extraordinary
832 noise in the village. On going to the outer porch door I saw about 25 persons of both sexes, entirely naked, going about the village singing and dancing. At times they withdrew in couples, but soon rejoined their companions in [327] the dance and song. During this short separation from the rest they appeared to be very closely engaged, and notwithstanding the night was dark I could perceive them occupied in enjoying each other with as little ceremony as if it had been only the common calls of nature. This affair continued about two hours, during which they made the tour of the village several times. What was the meaning of this ceremony I could not learn; but certainly there could be no performance more lascivious than the one I witnessed. The young men kept watch
625] during the night, sitting on the tops of the huts or walking round the village, singing amorous songs to their particular favorites. This is done, I am told, to prevent a surprise in case an enemy may be at
832 hand. Love is not made by entering the tent at night and lying
834 down near the woman, as it is among other nations I have seen. The custom here is to barricade the doors of the huts during the night and not admit the young men. The latter therefore employ the night in addressing love songs to their mistresses, who either come out of the huts immediately, or wait until daybreak, when they

832 repair to the cornfields and are soon followed by the young men,
834 who enjoy their company and take every liberty. The young
men then return, and, if no hunting party offers, pass the day on
461 the tops of the huts, sleeping in the sun, or strolling from hut to
526 hut, eating corn and smoking Missourie tobacco. At other times
they amuse themselves by running races either on foot or horseback,
and performing warlike manoeuvres; they have also a favorite
game which occupies much of their time.

512 [328]...this is the first work performed by the women in the
515 morning after having paid their devoirs to their lovers and washed
themselves in the Missourie. ...every family being provided
415 with a brass or copper kettle for the purpose of cooking flesh.
177 Whether this proceeds from superstition or not I cannot pretend to
771 say, but they assured me that any kind of flesh cooked in those
574 earthen pots would cause them to split. One or more of the largest
kind is constantly boiling prepared corn and beans, and all who come
in are welcome to help themselves to as much as they can eat of the
contents.

231 .....Early this morning our young hostler took our horses to feed
437 in the meadow but never allowed them to be for a moment out of
648 his sight, lest the Assiniboines or other enemies might steal them.
We purchased sweet corn, beans, meal, and various other trifles,
for which we paid in ammunition, beads, and tobacco.

439 [329] It would have been in vain for us to attempt to prevail
upon anyone in this village to ferry us over; for, as long as a stranger
has any property, they wish him to trade all he brings in the first
village he enters, every village being ambitious of getting as many
439 European articles as they can, [330] particularly arms and ammuni-
609 tion. This is good policy; for, notwithstanding they are so near each
other, and live in amity, they are not free from jealousy, and have
578 often had serious misunderstandings, sometimes ending in the death
669 of an individual, and nearly occasioning civil war. They have also
to guard against their natural enemies, the Sioux, who are at no great
distance. The Pawnees, also, with whom the Mandanes formerly
lived in the same villages, are now their most inveterate enemies.
Arms and ammunition are, therefore, necessary articles, and every-
one has a stock of ball and powder laid up in case of emergency.

675 We packed up our purchases, and gave them into the care of the
673 landlord. These people are much given to thieving, but in the hut
[577] in which a stranger is lodged, his property may be left in perfect
security; none dare touch it, as the master conceives his honor
concerned in whatever is placed under his immediate protection.
Out of doors, if they can pick your pocket, or pilfer any article,

675 it is gone in an instant, and search would be in vain; everyone
673 would wish to appear innocent, although they are not offended when
accused of stealing, but laugh the matter away. .....We paid
437 our landlord for board and lodging, as well as the care of our horses,
177 and of the articles left under his charge, as we never expect the
least favor from any of these fellows without recompensing them
accordingly. ~~He~~ appeared very well pleased with the following
articles, which we gave him: 60 rounds of ammunition, 4 large
knives, 2 awls, 1 fathom of tobacco, 1 steel, 5 flints, 1 dozen
hawk-bills, 2 worms (wormers for guns), and 1 dozen brass rings....

609 [332] My host was so obliging as to give up to me one of his
574 own best beds, well surrounded with dressed leather. We had a
plentiful supply of corn and beans, and were soon invited to several
huts, where we [333] were treated with a very palatable dish of
[431] pounded peas and parched corn; but it is customary for invited
guests, on leaving, to present the master of the hut with a few
inches of tobacco, for which he always appears very thankful.

728 [335] About 30 Big Bellies soon arrived on horseback, at full
speed; they brought an interpreter with them. This party consisted
of some of the principal war chiefs, and other great men, who did
not appear well pleased, but looked on the Pawnees with disdain.

285 [339] ...seated on a mat made of small willows of equal size,
fastened together [340] by threads of their own manufacture,
passed through each stick about a foot apart.

342 [340] Seldom more than one family occupies the same hut.

437 [342] We paid the young men for taking our horses across the
177 river, and the women for assisting us with the canoes. The total
cost was: 1 fathom of tobacco, 4 knives, 6 flints, 6 awls, 6 worms
[gun wormers—analyst], and 10 balls. I also paid my landlord
for the time we might remain here, which I supposed would be
about ten days for three persons, including board and lodging,
stabling for our horses, and care of our property. They make no
price, leaving that to the generosity of guests, and should the pay-
ment be too little they still appear to accept with gratitude; but
the visitor is afterward left to take care of his own property and
horses in the best manner he can. It is impossible to get the most
trifling service from the natives without immediate payment; not
even an inch of cord will they part with without receiving some-
thing in return. It is true a trifle will please them, and they are

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437 willing and ready to serve you as long as you have any property.
177 But when all is expended you may shift for yourself, as they will pretend they do not understand you any longer. Besides paying our host [343] beforehand, I promised him a tobacco-pipe on my departure, if I were then pleased with his conduct during our stay. His pay consisted of the following articles: 60 balls and powder, 4 large knives, 2 small knives, 1 fathom tobacco, 1 dozen rings, 1 dozen hawk-bills, 6 flints, 3 worms, 3 awls, and 1/4 pound blue beads.

164 [343] The natives at present are mostly affected with a bad cough, which daily takes some of them off. Aged and infirm persons, and young children, are the common victims to this disease. It is a kind of whooping-cough, which has appeared all along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, on the Saskatchewan even to Fort des Prairies, and in several other parts of the North West, carrying off many people

241 July 21st. I set off early on horseback with part of my people
[462 for the upper villages. We passed extensive fields of corn, beans,
561] squashes, and sunflowers. Many women and children were already
412 employed in clearing and hoeing their plantations. Their hoes are the shoulderblade of a buffalo, to which is fastened a crooked stick for a handle; the soil not being stony, this slight implement answers every purpose. The road first led over two hills, after which we came to a smooth and pleasant plain for about two miles to the Saulteur (Soulier) [Amahami—Analyst] village, of about 40 huts.

361 [362]. . These villages are surrounded by a kind of stockade, princi-
417 pally made of driftwood, which has a miserable appearance and is daily falling to pieces; but I am told that upon any emergency it can be put into a tolerably good state of defense at very short notice, as every man, woman, and child lends a hand.

526 We witnessed a diversion which takes place almost every day
481 between the Mandanes and Saulteurs (Souliers). It is the exercise
702 of running long foot races, in order to be prepared for the emergency of being dismounted and obliged to fly from their enemies at war. They assemble upon a beautiful green near the village, where, having remained some time, calling out to their comrades to come and run, they set off in a file on a slow trot, entirely naked, taking the road that leads up the hills to the S., about a mile from the village. Passing near those rising grounds, they disappear, and are not seen till they reappear from the S.E., down a steep hill and over a level plain, to the spot whence they started. Here they do not stop, but rush on to the Missourie, and plunge in headlong, all

526 covered with dust and sweat. The race is at least six miles long,
481 and it is surprising to see what a great distance some of them gain
702 upon others. This violent exercise is performed on the hottest summer days, and it is a wonder that some of them do not pay dearly for their temerity.

541 During my absence yesterday [July 21 - Analyst] my people, who remained here, witnessed a horse race. The Mandanes assembled in great numbers on horseback, and rode about three miles below the village, where all mustered. They set out in a body, pell-mell, whipping and kicking their horses, directing their course along the foot of the hills, and made a long circuit at full speed around the village. Some of their horses appeared very swift and spirited, but others were miserable animals. On their arrival, they performed their warlike manoeuvres on horseback, feigning their different attacks upon the enemy, giving their strokes of the battleax and thrusts of the spear, and defending themselves in turn by parrying blows and covering themselves with their shields.

526 ...I observed one particular game among the Mandanes, which the young men were continually playing. Two persons are each provided with a stick six feet long, on which are cut a certain number of notches, an inch long, in the intervals of which are fixed the same number of small bunches of feathers of divers colors, with three pieces of wood, 16 inches square, one near each end, and one in the middle; these are perforated in the center, and through them is passed the rod, painted of divers colors. Each notch has a particular mark, the nature of which they themselves only understand—indeed, the same may be said of the whole game. The ground on which they play is a smooth level space, about 40 paces long and 5 broad. The players stand side by side, start from one end of the ground, and trot on till they are halfway through, when one of them throws a ball gently ahead, in such a manner that it will not roll further than the space allowed for the game; at the same time both players push their rod forward to overtake and keep pace with the ball, but not to check its course. They then examine the particular notch or bunch of feathers at which the ball stops, and count accordingly.

304 The greater part of the men—Big Bellies, Mandanes, and
787 Saulteurs (Souliers)—have lost a joint of several fingers, [364]
785 particularly of the left hand, and it is not uncommon to see only the

304 two forefingers and thumbs entire. Amputation is performed for
787 the loss of a near relation, and likewise during the days of penance,
785 on which they display their fortitude and courage in the following manner: When a young man has attained the age of 20 years, he generally, in the depth of winter, performs his penance by setting out entirely naked and alone, with only two or three pairs of shoes, the iron barb of an arrow, and no means of making a fire. In this condition he repairs to a certain high hill, a day's journey from the village. On this hill he must remain as many days as his strength will permit, during which time he neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps, but passes the time in dancing, bawling, howling, and lamenting. Here also he amputates a finger with the iron barb brought for that purpose. Some have been known to be absent seven days in the severest weather. This may appear incredible, but I have it from several eye-witnesses of such pilgrimages, and do not doubt it. After several days—more or fewer—the penitent makes his appearance, coming at full speed, and as there is continually somebody upon the huts, information is instantly given of his return. He is met by a particular friend, who has kept account of the number of days he has been absent, and for every day has been prepared a bull's head, to which has been fastened 1 1/2 fathams of cord. The other end of this is affixed to an incision in the penitent's back or shoulders, by pinching up a fold of skin and flesh, through which is thrust the barb of an arrow; as many days as he has been absent, so many must be the incisions, and the number of heads must also tally with them. He must then walk around the village, howling and bawling, with all those bulls' heads trailing on the ground; in some places, where the ground is rough, the poor fellow must pull and tug hard to get through, as the horns continually catch in uneven spots, and often fall into some of the empty corn pits, where they would hold until the skin gave way or the cord broke, were they not [365] attended to by some children who make it their business to disengage the horns. So many days as he has been absent, so many times must he walk round the village, never ceasing to utter lamentations. Some have been known to fall senseless during this painful ordeal; but even then they only allow themselves a few moments to recover, and proceed again. Having finished the necessary rounds, he is disengaged from the bulls' heads by his friend, with a long harangue, applauding his courage and fortitude; he may then retire to his hut and take care of his wounds, as he is in a shocking condition. Some never recover, and others languish for months before they get well.

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304 They have another custom of putting their courage and con-
785 tempt of pain to task by tormenting their flesh in a most atrocious manner. This is done by pinching up a fold of the skin and flesh an inch broad, under which they pass the iron barb of an arrow; they raise stripes in this manner from the back of the hand to the shoulder, and thence to the breast, there joining three or four separate circles of incisions made in the same manner on the lower part of the breast. Some content themselves by raising stripes of different lengths upon their arms and thighs, and forming crescentic cuts on the breast in a very regular manner, one within the other; some with the horns upward, others downward, according to fancy.

304 Most of the women have their faces tattooed in a very savage manner, lines a quarter inch broad passing from the nose to the ear, and down each side of the mouth and chin to the throat. This disfigures them very much; otherwise, some would have tolerably
304 good faces. Some tattooing is done to beautify the face, but at
684 other times it is the disfiguring mark of a fit of jealousy in the husband. [366] When a Mandane's handsome young wife is too lavish of her favors without his consent, he tattoes her face as a punish-
[578] ment. Although it cannot be said that these people are much given
837 to jealousy, still it is absolutely necessary for a woman to have the consent of her husband to cohabit with a stranger, whether he is white or one of their own people. But I observed during my stay that this consent is not so very necessary in regard to the inhabitants of the same village, as every morning early there were examples to be seen in their plantations of their loose way of living. Many
[164] of our servants who frequent these parts to trade in the winter, and who have too intimate connections with the fair sex, are attacked by a painful and loathsome disorder, which commonly appears in the groin, where it forms abscesses and, if neglected, will soon prove dangerous.

574 [401] At three o'clock we were all safely lodged in Black Cat's
609 hut, whom we found as usual very civil and complaisant, although he plainly saw we had nothing to pay him for his trouble. This man is one of the best Indians we met on the Missourie. We found
[432] what articles we had left in his charge all in good order, and carefully hung up to keep them from the mice. He even gave me his best horse upon credit; payment to be sent this fall by any opportunity. This was considered an extraordinary circumstance for a Mandane. He gave us several instances of his good nature and generosity while we were packing; every assistance in his power he gave us, without

574 any expectation of payment. Being almost destitute of tobacco
609 for our journey, he gave us some of their own manufacture. As
that herb is not yet arrived at maturity, they use only the blossoms
277 [402] at present. These are collected as required, dried before
the fire on a fragment of an earthen pot, and smoked by all the
natives. But I find the flowers a very poor substitute for our own
tobacco—a nauseous, insipid weed. The ripe leaf is somewhat
better, but even that is mere trash, possessed of neither strength
nor virtue.

648 [403] We soon after took the road, bidding a final adieu to
[491] the Mandanes. The road through the wood was very muddy and bad.
[137] We found amazing quantities of poires, perfectly ripe. The
natives here are so surrounded by their different enemies at all
seasons, and particularly when the fruit is ripe, that the women dare
not leave the villages to gather it, though there is a great plenty
of chokecherries, cerises, etc. Even when they go out to hoe their
corn, young men, well armed, keep on the rounds at short dis-
tances from the women to prevent surprise from an enemy. This
is a necessary precaution, as they have frequently been attacked
while working in the fields. The village on the N. side lies under
a double disadvantage, surrounded by thick woods for nearly two
miles upon the land side, and having close by a vast quantity of
young sprouts and brushwood, enabling an enemy to approach very
near without being discovered. A single Sioux has been known to
secrete himself for several days among those bushes until a favorable
opportunity has offered, when he has dispatched a Mandane, and
got away with the scalp.

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